



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF
CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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NEWS RELEASE

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Judicial Council Takes Action on Budget Allocations for the Trial Courts

San Francisco—In action designed to continue the effective operations of California's 58 trial courts, the Judicial Council of California on Monday approved funding allocations and the reimbursement of certain costs for the courts during the current fiscal year.

The 27-person council, chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, for the first time approved funding for the trial courts received through the new State Appropriations Limit (SAL) budget funding process.

The SAL funding process was implemented to ensure that funding is distributed to the courts in a uniform and equitable manner and to provide for increases and adjustments for funding in reimbursable areas.

FUTURE FUNDING NEEDS

In addition, the council approved a new methodology that will be used to address funding needs for under-resourced courts and those with growing workloads due to population increases.

"The new Resource Allocation Study (RAS) methodology is an important first step in establishing equitable funding in the California trial courts," said William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the California Courts. Mr. Vickrey noted that technical adjustments may be made to the methodology in the future based on input from the courts.

Developed after a comprehensive statewide study, the model allows for the comparison of resource needs throughout the state's 58 trial courts, based on each court's weighted filings and standards derived from average court resources required to process the filings.

BUDGET ACTIONS

At a public meeting, the council approved trial court budget allocations and reimbursements totaling \$136.2 million for fiscal year 2005–2006.

This new funding results primarily from an increase in the State Appropriations Limit (SAL). Council actions included the following:

- Approved \$56.421 million in funding for allocation to the courts to be used to meet staff compensation, operating expenses, and other costs at the trial courts' discretion.
- Approval of \$24.2 million in court security funding. Funding for court security based upon established standards will be discussed at a future Judicial Council meeting.
- Approval of \$16 million for increased retirement costs.
- Approval of \$13.86 million based on application of the Resource Allocation Study.
- Approval of \$14.996 million for the court interpreters program.
- Approval of \$9.581 million for reimbursement of costs related to extraordinary homicide trials, prisoner hearings, services of process for protective orders, drug courts, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the Model Self-Help Program, and family law.

As part of the judicial branch budget for the current fiscal year, the Governor vetoed \$57.5 million in trial court funding earmarked to address unanticipated shortfalls in various areas such as court-appointed counsel, technology projects, and cash flow issues in years when the budget is late.

The Governor also reduced the branch budget by an additional \$9.8 million in fiscal year 2005–2006. This funding was already obligated to pay for law libraries, dispute resolution, and children's waiting rooms; and information technology.

The impact of these reductions on the trial courts and their ability to provide continued access to justice is still being evaluated.

Judicial Council meeting materials may be viewed online at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/jc/documents/age0705.pdf>.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.